GROUPING FOR INSTRUCTION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 1950 - 1960

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Society is committed to equality of educational opportunity. Therefore, it is the obligation of schools to recognize the varying needs and abilities of all students.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of the study of grouping practices in certain typical public elementary schools, 1950 to 1960, was to set forth, (1) the types of grouping used for instruction, (2) the instructional advantages and disadvantages claimed for each type of grouping, and (3) the philosophies stated as underlying the grouping practices, as reported in periodical literature, bulletins, and books.

Importance of the study. The increasing population in the schools had directed increased attention to schools and school programs.

Barbe, in considering the education of the gifted, pointed out that:

> Even though there are a number of provisions for the gifted, there is little agreement among educators as to the relative merits of acceleration, enrichment within

the classroom, and homogeneous grouping.[1]

Since Sputnik, there has been renewed interest in an examination of grouping practices in the classroom.[2]

Grouping has two goals: administrative ease and improved instruction. These two areas were even more prominent because of the expanding population in proportion to the number of teachers. Thus, it almost assured that children would have their learning experiences organized on a group basis in the future.[3]

Clausen stated that concern about grouping came from increased knowledge about the nature of the present society and the great amount of information available about how children grow and learn. Current grouping practices have appeared to be inconsistent with the principles of good educational programs.[4]

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[1]Walter B. Barbe, "Are Gifted Children Being Adequately Provided For?", Educational Administration and Supervision, XL (November, 1954), 413..

[2]Myrtle M. Imhoff and Wayne Young, "School Organization," Review of Educational Research, XXIX (April, 1959), 159.

[3]Hanne J. Hicks, Administration Leadership in the Elementary School, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1956), p. 167.

[4]Robert Clausen, "Why Probe Grouping Practices?", Childhood Education, XXXVI (April, 1960), 352.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Homogeneous grouping. In the study, homogeneous grouping was the grouping of children with a similarity or similarities which included ability, achievement, age, other pertinent criteria, and combinations of these.

Heterogeneous grouping. In the study, heterogeneous grouping was the grouping of children with various interests, skills or aptitudes, and intelligence levels.

Ability grouping. In the study, ability grouping was a grouping of pupils on the basis of ability as measured by intelligence tests or/and achievement.

Ungraded grouping. Ungraded grouping referred to groups where the grade lines were abandoned for a specified number of semesters or years.

III. LIMITATIONS

In reviewing the literature, limitations were found in that most writings were about individual programs with limited criteria, gains and losses, and advantages and disadvantages given. In addition, very little extensive research has been done on homogeneous grouping and heterogeneous grouping since the Thirties. Ungraded plans have been too few and most of them too short in duration to provide research

information of intrinsic value.

IV. GROUPING OF CHILDREN PREVIOUS TO 1950

For almost two centuries, elementary schools functioned before children were taught in classes.[1] Instruction in early colonial times was mostly an individual matter. Pupils were grouped then, but not necessarily for improved instruction.[2]

Grouping of pupils into grades did not become a common practice until after the Civil War. Increase of urbanization was a cause. The homogeneous method of organization was the ultimate outcome.[3]

In 1898, a plan referred to as the Batavia Plan was set up to aid the slow learners. Programs to divide children into slow, average, and gifted groups were also inaugurated about this time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the platoon grouping plan was developed. This plan provided for two

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[1]Virgil E. Herrick, John I. Goodlad, Frank J. Estvan, and Paul W. Eberman, The Elementary School (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 37.

[2]William C. Reavis, Paul R. Price, Edward H. Stullken, and Bertrand L. Smith, Administering the Elementary School (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953), p. 336.

[3]Herrick, Goodlad, Estvan, and Eberman, loc. cit.

groups. While one group studied fundamentals, the other was having activity subjects in special rooms. Although the plan was to help individual progress, it served an economy purpose.

The Dalton Plan, 1919, provided for teaching physical, social, and emotional subjects to the whole class and the academic subjects were taught on an individual progress basis.

Just before World War I, limited provisions were made for children of various ages or capacities who did not fit into their regular classrooms. Opportunity or ungraded rooms were set up. Special classes and special schools were set up on a limited basis just before World War I and increased in number after the war.[1]

The development of standardized tests and intelligence tests after World War I provided a further trend toward homogeneous grouping.[2]

At this point, the X-Y-Z homogeneous ability grouping plan came into being. The plan divided children into fast, average, and slow ability groups. The purpose of the plan was to adjust teaching methods in accordance with

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[1] Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[2] Herold C. Hunt and Paul R. Pierce, The Practice of School Administration (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958), p. 270.

varying child capacities.[1]

Ability grouping, on a large scale, started in Detroit, Michigan in about 1920. Ability grouping dominated thinking through the Twenties and into the Thirties.[2]

During the Twenties, evidence accumulated showed that there was still a wide variance of abilities within the groups. The test results were then used to help group within the classes.[3]

A continuous growth plan, on a limited basis, came about after 1930. With this plan came the first real breakdown of grade lines. Pupils spent about three years in the primary grades and progressed at their own rate. Various methods were used in determining the grouping of the children.[4]

The Forties, with the tremendous increase in school population, found educators debating between homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping and the varying degrees of each. The importance of social and emotional values was realized more

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[1]Herrick, Goodlad, Estvan, and Eberman, loc. cit.

[2]Harold G. Shane (ed.), The American Elementary School, Thirteenth Yearbook of the John Dewey Society (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1953), p. 113.

[3]Hunt and Pierce, loc. cit.

[4]W. A. Saucier, Theory and Practice in the Elementary School (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), pp. 434-38.

fully. Research in the area of grouping plans was inconsistent.[1]

As of January, 1948, fifty-three per cent of the city school systems were making some use of ability grouping. The larger the school population, the more often ability grouping was used. This type of grouping was being abandoned at about the same rate as it was being started in school systems, according to a survey reported by Otto. The trend was away from ability grouping in the larger schools and towards ability grouping in the smaller schools. The regions of the United States were found to be a factor in the trends.[2]

A trend in abandoning grade lines was found in a survey of 1948. It revealed that 17 per cent of the school systems represented in the survey were abandoning grade line divisions. The larger the system, the more often it was being done. It also revealed that 43 per cent of the school systems had ungraded classrooms. Again it was found that the larger cities led the way.[3]

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[1]Harold G. Shane and E. T. McSwain, Evaluation and the Elementary Curriculum (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), pp. 308-9.

[2]"Trends in City-School Organization 1938-1948," National Education Association Research Bulletin, XXVII (February, 1949), 16-17.

[3]Ibid., 18.

V. PROCEDURES USED

A review and study of periodicals, books, and bulletins was made to learn the history of grouping until 1950, and the existing types of grouping for instruction in the elementary schools since 1950.

The limited studies and full-scale studies, surveys, and related experiences were separated from the philosophies, or expressions, of educators and others. The studies, surveys, and experiences were reviewed for advantages and disadvantages of each type of grouping.

A summary was made of the advantages and disadvantages of each type of grouping, criteria used for the grouping, and the proponents' and opponents' expressions of the different types of grouping.

CHAPTER II

GROUPING PRACTICES, 1950 - 1960

Various types of grouping practices were reported in literature that was reviewed. The grouping plans fell into three main categories; homogenious, ungraded, and heterogenous. Several plans within each type of grouping were similar in one or more ways. The established or experimental use of a particular plan had come about from dissatisfaction with past experiences and desires for better learning.

Most educators agree that the prime purpose of grouping or classroom organization is to provide a situation in which students learn most effectively.[1]

The most practical solution to individualized teaching is grouping. It assures every child participation and gives him a feeling of belonging.[2]

Strevell and Oliver stated that it was obvious there were many essential learning experiences which a child can have only through working in a group situation.[3]

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[1] John I. Goodlad, "Classroom Organization," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (3rd ed.), 222.

[2] Muriel Crosby, Supervision as Co-operative Action (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), pp. 230-31.

[3] Wallace H. Strevell and Pauline Oliver, "Grouping Can Be Flexible Within the Classroom," Nation's Schools, LIX (February, 1957), 89-90.

Motivation of children's learning can be brought about through classroom grouping, but it must be skillfully carried out. Grouping provides a means of social organization which is very important to the individual child.[1]

For better human relations in the classroom, Howard and Beauchamp stated that, "Two principles serve to guide us toward desirable group practices: keep groups flexible and form groups through the consideration of many factors."[2]

Woodring summed up the meeting of children's needs with the following suggestions: separate schools for gifted and retarded, grade skipping and retardation, universal promotion, homogeneous grouping, ungraded system, and grouping on the basis of demonstrated achievement and capacity in each separate subject.[3]

I. HOMOGENEOUS GROUPING

Homogeneous grouping applied to grouping of children with a similarity or similarities in one or more areas.

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[1]Bernice Baxter, Gertrude M. Lewis, and Gertrude M. Cross, Elementary Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1952), p. 123.

[2]Howard Lane and Mary Beauchamp, Human Relations in Teaching (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 311.

[3]Paul Woodring, "Ability Grouping, Segregation and the Intellectual Elite," School and Society, LXXXVII (April, 1959), 164.

A survey of how children were distributed in groups was reported by Shane in 1952. The results showed that 11 per cent of the administrators used ability grouping as a factor for the placement of children.[1]

In 1956, a nation-wide poll of administrators was taken on the question, "Do you favor grouping of children through the early years of school on the basis of ability rather than on typical age grade system?" The poll revealed these results: 40.3 per cent, yes; 59.2 per cent, no; and 0.5 per cent, undecided.[2]

McAulay reported a survey of one-hundred thirty elementary schools in five contiguous states, which showed the extent of homogeneous grouping being practiced. The survey revealed that seventy of these schools reported some ability grouping. The greatest amount of ability grouping was in the fifth and sixth grades. It was revealed that ability grouping was used as far down as the first grade.[3]

Homogeneous grouping plans reviewed. Allentown,

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[1]Harold G. Shane, "Grouping Practices Seem to Favor Composite Plan," Nation's Schools, XLXIX (May, 1952), 72-73.

"Opinion Poll," Nation's Schools, LVI (November, 1955), 6.

J. D. McAulay, "Five Straws in the Wind," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (June, 1960), 395.

Pennsylvania set up an entire school of opportunity classes for the gifted in the elementary school through the sixth grade. Children from throughout the system were brought to the school.[1]

Cleveland had worked on a gifted program for thirty years. Major work classes were set up for the gifted in part of the schools. These were similar to regular classes except that their procedures were different and extra subjects were added. The grouping for major work classes was started with the second half of the first grade. The groups were made up of combined grades, usually three, although this varied according to the situation. The usual grade combinations were second; third and fourth; or fourth, fifth, and sixth. The children were given a group intelligence test soon after coming to school, to determine their probable learning rate. If possible, they were given the Stanford-Binet Individual Interest Test. Those with an intelligence quotient of 125 and above were considered the gifted.[2]

Hunter College Elementary School for gifted children selected all applicants by using the Stanford-Binet Test,

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[1]Albert Oliver, "Administrative Problems in Educating the Gifted," Nation's Schools, XLVIII (November, 1951), 44.

[2]Walter B. Barbe and Dorothy N. Norris, "Special Classes for Gifted in Cleveland," Exceptional Children, XXI (November, 1954), 55.

The program provided for early identification of pupils' abilities.[1]

The Astorial and Corvallis districts in Oregon, in a pilot program in 1955, grouped the children homogeneously in grades four through six. The criteria used were group intelligence tests, school achievement tests, and teacher ratings. An individual test was given to those who rated highly. With these statistics and parent conferences, the children were homogeneously grouped. At the time the program was explained, it was too early for complete conclusions.[2]

A school in Tampa, Florida, grouped the pupils into gifted, high average, low average, and slow learning groups. There was little shifting of students from group to group after the initial assignment. Several criteria were used in grouping, including general achievement, results of standardized tests, teacher judgment from cumulative records, reading ability, creative ability, originality, and intelligence quotient.

The grade equivalents resulting from the Stanford Achievement Test were very significantly in favor of this

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[1] Antonia Bell Morgan, "Identification and Guidance of Gifted Children," Scientific Monthly, LXXX (March, 1955),

[2] Ibid., 172-73.

grouping. Progress results were from fourteen to fifty-four months with many showing more than forty months progress. Medians showing progress of more than twenty months were the usual, rather than the exception, for the gifted group.

No extreme attitudes between the slow group and others seemed to exist. The sixth grade level proved the most successful.[1]

Since 1951, University City, Missouri, had a program for the gifted for grades two through six. From intelligence quotient scores, achievement scores, and teacher recommendations, children were screened. The intelligence quotient scores varied greatly in a gifted group, from one class to another and from school to school. None were below 140. Pupils, in small groups and usually a single grade level, met twice a week for forty to fifty minutes. The pupils sometimes worked on extended regular class work, special projects, and other work situations. The program was considered to have met the needs of the gifted children in the elementary grades as well as other grades.[2]

The Colfax Plan for gifted children, initiated in the

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[1]Fay C. Riley, "Grouping Gives Each Child a Chance," Nation's Schools, LVIII (August, 1956), 51-55.

[2]James Dunlap, "Gifted Children in an Enriched Program," Exceptional Children, XXI (January, 1955), 135-37.

Colfax School of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was not understood at first by all the teachers. At first, pressures were exerted on those already working to their capacities, as academic achievement was the only consideration.[1] The gifted children were segregated for part of the day. During this part of the day, the gifted pupils had their skill subjects.[2] At first, the workshops for the gifted consisted of one for grades 1 through 3 and one for grades 4 through 6. In 1958, there was a workshop for each grade level except the first two.[3]

Mary Loomis reported that research was done on acceptance and rejection patterns at the Colfax School. The patterns were more prominent within ability groups than between ability groups.[4] The study involved sixty-seven gifted pupils from grades four through six. The sociometrics indicated that the workshop pupils tended to accept and

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[1]Hedwig Pregler, "The Colfax Plan," Exceptional Children, XX (February, 1954), 198-200.

[2]Hedwig Pregler, "Adjustment Through Partial Segregation," National Elementary Principal, XXXII (September, 1952), 243.

[3]Dorothy E. Norris, "Programs in the Elementary Schools," Education for the Gifted, The fifty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), 240-41.

[4]Mary Jane Loomis, "The Right Child in the Right Classroom," National Education Association Journal, XLVIII (September, 1959), 17-18.

reject more workshop children than typical children. Typical children tended to accept and reject more typical children than workshop children. There was a significant difference between scores of workshop children in a common homeroom and those sharing a workshop.[1]

Waukeegan used two plans; one for small schools and one for the larger schools. In the larger schools the gifted pupils of grades five and six are grouped together for one hour per day while the other students are having reading class. A formal reading class for these students was not deemed necessary. During the one hour period, the gifted students worked on their projects. In the smaller schools the children were heterogeneously grouped, except for reading. Grades four through six were combined according to reading ability.[2]

Shane and McSwain revealed a midwest county plan for homogeneous grouping in reading that was mechanical in nature. To meet the needs of the pupils in the area of reading, all six grades had reading at the same time of day. A bell rang and each child went to a classroom corresponding

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[1] Horace Mann, "How Real Are Friendships of Gifted and Typical Children in a Program of Partial Segregation?" Exceptional Children, XXIII (February, 1957), 200-1, 206.

[2] James Capra, "Individualizing Instruction," American School Board Journal, CXXXVII (December, 1958), 17-18.

with his reading level. The levels had been determined through standardized tests. The grouping was done without regard for social or emotional values.[1]

Seattle, Washington used a plan similar to the one reported by Shane and McSwain. The plan was used in the fourth grade. More factors were taken into consideration before assignment to a reading group.[2]

Barbe and Waterhouse reported on a program used in a Chattanooga, Tennessee elementary school. All the fourth through sixth grades, two grades of each level, were grouped by reading level for one period a day. During October, the teacher rated each child in reading. A group standardized test was given to each child. They were then divided according to their level. The program ran for six months between testing. During that time, there was an increase of .9 year in the fourth and sixth grades and 1.2 years in grade five. No effort was made to see how much progress could be made, but each was taught at his rate. The children

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[1]Harold G. Shane and E. T. McSwain, Evaluation and the Elementary Curriculum (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), pp. 307-8.

[2]Esther Skonnord Carlson and Joyce Northrup, "An Experiment in Grouping Pupils for Instruction in Reading," Reading for Today's Children, Thirty-fourth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals, Vol. XXXV (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1955), 53-57.

in the low groups showed the greatest amount of individual improvement.[1]

A Joplin elementary school launched a new program because of a wide reading range. Grades four through six participated in the program. For a forty-five minute period, pupils were homogeneously grouped for basal reading instruction. The criteria for the grouping came from the results of standardized group reading tests, previous school records, and teachers' knowledge of the children. The social aspects resulting from the program had not yet been evaluated.[2]

Kathryn McElroy reported her school used homogeneous grouping to provide the best possible reading program. The program involved grades from kindergarten through third.[3]

The elimination of excessive ability groups and provision for the above average pupils who were performing

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[1]Walter B. Barbe and Tina S. Waterhouse, "An Experimental Program in Reading," Elementary English, XXXV (February, 1956), 102-104.

[2]Cecil Floyd, "Meeting Children's Reading Needs in the Middle Grades - A Preliminary Report," Elementary School Journal, LV (October, 1954), 100-103.

[3]Kathryn Mohr McElroy, "Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Grouping for Teaching Reading in Kindergarten Through Grade Three," Reading Instruction in Various Patterns of Grouping, Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading Held at the University of Chicago, 1959, Vol. XXI (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 27-28.

below their ability were the objectives in Oakley, California. Placement of the pupils was done in the spring. The placement of a pupil depended upon a composite picture of achievement patterns; reading ability and less emphasis on arithmetic and spelling; social, mental, and physical maturity; emotional stability; teacher-pupil relationship; and additional tests when necessary. The classes were not to have more than three reading groups.[1]

Goodlad outlined the Flint Plan. A large group of pupils, as if one class, were under the direction of a specified number of teachers. The teachers, together, planned the total program for the group. The number of reading groups was cut with these teachers' grouping and the groups were more homogeneous.[2]

Wrighstone stated, "The actual reductions in range are about 15-17 per cent when classes are divided into three ability levels, and only 7-10 per cent when there are two

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[1]"Providing for the Individual Pupil Through Grouping Procedures," Elementary School Journal, LVII (December, 1956), 150-52.

[2]John I. Goodlad, "Appraising New Patterns of Organization for Reading Instruction," Reading Instruction in Various Patterns of Grouping, Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading Held at the University of Chicago, 1959, Vol. XXI (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), 24.

ability groups.[1]

An interesting plan was used at Dedham, Massachusetts. Teams of two or three each, within each class, progressed at their own rate in comparison to their ability. Pupils in grades four through six participated. The teams varied with purpose. A team that had similar ability in one area did not necessarily have the same ability in another area. Thus, a new team would be formed in the new area. In moving at their capabilities, they could go into the next grade tests. Teacher controls and rules for activities were a necessary prerequisite.[2]

Advantages of homogeneous grouping for the plans reviewed. In twelve of the sixteen plans reviewed, claims were made that there was greater achievement through the use of homogeneous grouping. Better social adjustment was claimed for four of the plans. In eight of the plans, it was claimed that there was less tension and frustration with this type of grouping. The advantage of this type grouping claimed for eight of the plans, was that the needs of the

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[1]J. Wayne Wrightstone, "Class Organization for Instruction," National Education Association Journal, XLVI (April, 1957), 254.

[2]Harvey B. Scribner, "Remove Schackles and Watch Growth," American School Board Journal, CXXXVIII (June, 1959), 56.

gifted pupils were met. For four of the plans an advantage claimed was that there was more time allotted where needed. For two of the plans, it was claimed ability ranges and the number of groups were minimized. In eleven of the plans, it was claimed that there was more stimulation for children to work to their capacities. The advantage of this type grouping claimed for three of the plans was the adaptability to most schools.

Disadvantages and problems of homogeneous grouping for the plans reviewed. Of the sixteen plans reviewed, only one disadvantage or problem was claimed for each of six plans of homogeneous grouping. These were undesirable group attitudes, not grouping children at the right time, not adaptable to some schools, disregard of social and emotional values, lack of teacher cooperation, and need for further enrichment.

Philosophies of educators on homogeneous grouping. Homogeneous grouping was not considered to be undemocratic. It was an attempt to recognize each child's right to an education fitting for him. It did not mean that children were identical but it implied they were alike, that their abilities and talents were commensurable, and that their potentials were highly similar. Homogeneous grouping did not maladjust the child. "Research indicates that, in general, children

tend to gravitate toward contacts with other children of similar mental and intellectual levels."[1]

Magnifico believed that people do tend to segregate themselves into groups of mutual interest.[2]

Wilhelms believed that ability should be done field by field, especially in arithmetic and reading. In this way, the ablest were freed to proceed and the less able were given the help they needed.[3]

In segregating the gifted, there must be many factors taken into consideration and not a single criterion such as intelligence quotient or achievement level. Children usually were not segregated early enough, at the right time, at the right places, for the right purposes, or by the right criteria for the best results. No bad results have been noted by MacLean where segregation or desegregation of the gifted was well done.[4]

If a gifted child was forced to follow the same curriculum, he would become antagonistic as would the dull

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[1]Lawson, op. cit., 265-58.

[2]L. X. Magnifico, "Social Promotion and Special Education," School and Society, LXXXVI (May, 1958), 217.

[3]Fred T. Wilhelms, "Grouping Within the Elementary Classroom," National Education Association Journal, XLVIII (September, 1959), 20.

[4]Malcolm S. MacLean, "Should the Gifted Be Segregated?" Educational Leadership, XIII (January, 1956), 216-17.

child because he was forced to compete.[1]

Woodring said that the fallacy that ability grouping in subjects would lead to an intellectual elite, should be put aside. The purpose of ability grouping was not to develop such a group, but to provide for fast as well as slow learners.[2]

Opponents of homogeneous grouping said there was only a small change of individual differences and academic achievement differences continued. They also believed social personal learning was not given as much consideration.[3]

Washburne made the following comments:

> No grouping based on an averaging of the children's mental levels and their achievement levels in various school subjects can, in the nature of things, result in real equality among the children of the group in regard to each of the various kinds of maturity.[4]

Ketcham claimed there was no end to shuffling for homogeneous groups.[5]

Grouping by classrooms for homogeneity in large

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[1]Magnifico, loc. cit.

[2]Paul Woodring, "Ability Grouping, Segregation and the Intellectual Elite," School and Society, LXXXVII (April, 1959), 168.

[3]J. Wayne Wrightstone, loc. cit.

[4]Carleton W. Washburne, "Adjusting the Program to the Child," Educational Leadership, XI (December, 1953), 142.

[5]Warren A. Ketcham, "Child Growth and Development," Childhood Education, XXXII (December, 1955), 156.

communities seldom was effective unless there was grouping within the classroom, commented Johnson.[1]

Advocates of homogeneous grouping almost universally favored a criterion of ability or achievement. For ability grouping, intelligence quotient scores were usually used. Such problems from this type of grouping had been under-achievement, aspiring parents, high motivation, and sincere interest. With this type of grouping, the acquisition of subject matter is usually the primary goal. Within certain limits, freedom of choice was considered a virtue by the advocates as well as those opposing class grouping by ability.[2]

II. UNGRADED GROUPING

The absence of grade lines in elementary schools had gained substantially. It called for a great deal of planning.

Surveys of ungraded plans, 1950 to 1960. There were 225 returns to 435 questionnaires sent out in 1950 to find out how many schools were combining age or grade groups. It

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[1] Johnson, op. cit., 19.

[2] O. L. Davis, Jr., "Grouping for Instruction: Some Perspectives," Educational Forum, XXIV (January, 1960), 210-11.

was revealed that 39.1 per cent were doing so. Grades one and two were the most frequently combined, followed by second and third; third and fourth; and first, second, and third.

The survey found administration, especially in the large schools, and needs of the students as the main reasons given for the combining of age or grade groups.

Advantages given in response to the questionnaire were: development of social values, tolerance of others, democratic processes and leadership, elimination of grade promotion pressures, improvement in learning skills, stimulation of superior students of the younger children, and provisions for different abilities in different areas.

Opponents responded with opposition of parents, especially those with children at high levels; scheduling difficulty; increased requirements of teachers; teachers assigning leadership to upper group too much; and ability range too wide.[1]

Goodlad reported in 1955 that a survey of 16 schools, which had some form of continuous pupil-progress plan, revealed that ten had the program in the primary only and three extended the program to the upper elementary. The

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[1]Ada R. Polkinghorne, "Grouping Children in the Primary Grades," Elementary School Journal, (May, 1950), 503-506.

primary and intermediate unit plans had the following advantages:

> These are: (1) a unit span of years that is adaptable to the lags and spurts normally accompanying the development of a child; (2) progress levels that permit a child to pick up after an absence from school at the point he previously left off; (3) a time range that permits children of approximately the same chronological age to remain together while progressing at different academic rates suited to individual capacities.[1]

In 1958, Goodlad and Anderson reported nineteen states had communities or individual schools that had a non-graded program where at least two consecutive years there was no grade division. This group of states was led by California and followed by Wisconsin. Nearly thirty other communities contemplated some form of ungraded plan in the 1958-59 school year or soon thereafter. Five other communities were thought to have a program. Several systems were operating on the philosophy of this plan but were using grade levels. Further statistics revealed that:

> Of existing plans, only 14 were initiated before 1950 and 12 were started within the past three years. Only 11 communities reported discontinuation of non-graded programs during the same period.[2]

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[1]John I. Goodlad, "Ungrading the Elementary Grades," National Education Association Journal, XLIV (March, 1955), 170-71.

[2]John I. Goodlad and Robert A. Anderson, "The Non-graded Elementary School," National Education Association Journal, XLVII (December, 1958), 642.

Studies of ungraded programs, 1950-1960. A three year study on multigrade grouping in Torrance, California showed more learning in reading, arithmetic, and language according to standardized tests. Multigrade pupils in forty-six out of forty-eight statistical comparison showed greater gains.[1]

Hamilton and Rehwoldt, in 1957, reported a study of comparison between multi-grade, multi-age grouping, and single-grade grouping. The study was made on the basis that grouping by similarities cannot be justified. The comparisons were made on general average and by match pair technique. The advantages of the wide-age range classes were greater achievement, greater improvement in personal and social adjustment, the fact that the younger children in the classes tended to be more secure and less withdrawn than those of similar age in single-grade classes, greater social maturity, and better attitudes by children towards the school.[2]

Wrightstone said that after six semesters in an ungraded primary, children were found to have better social

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[1]J. H. Hull, "Multigrade Teaching," Nation's Schools, LXII (July, 1958), 33.

[2]Warren Hamilton and Walter Rehwoldt, "By Their Differences They Learn," National Elementary Principal, XXXVII (December, 1957), 27-28.

and academic adjustment than those in a graded primary. Also there was likely to be less retardation at the end of the three year primary period. Two problems that had to be faced were getting parents and teachers to understand the plan, and being accurate in the initial placement of each individual.[1]

Ungraded grouping plans, 1950-1960. In a Wyoming elementary school, first grade retentions were mostly those of younger age. In changing their program, the first step was the changing of the entrance age. The primary was organized on growth and development levels with three levels in grade. Children were grouped according to their maturity or progress in school.

Children just entering school were grouped according to those most nearly ready for school. This was determined through a check on reading readiness, personal interview, teacher and principal appraisal of child's interest, and reactions of the child. Another group was made up of those nearly average in maturity and readiness for reading. Another group met only chronological age requirements.

The program was installed in the fourth grade. A four year period was set for a child to complete the reading program. Children were promoted from growth level to growth

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[1] Wrightstone, loc. cit.

level. The program was considered to eliminate frustration and unhappiness.[1]

In 1950, the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago organized primary groups. Each group had an equal number of six and seven year olds. Each group was comparable in all phases. The homerooms had social studies, art, nature study, literature, free reading, some writing, and numbers. Writing, numbers, and reading were instructed in small groups. The younger children went home at noon. Those children left were divided into ability groups for reading and special attention. During the morning, the younger children received the special attention while the others were doing activities. At times, children were together for music and gym.[2] Since the change in grouping, the median intelligence quotient is lower and scores on the Metropolitan Achievement Test were higher. The grouping had not damaged the academic achievement.[3]

Milwaukee began a primary-school plan in 1942. Where administratively possible, children of similar chronological

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[1]James E. Houston, "Progress Levels," Nation's Schools, XLV (April, 1950), 42-43.

[2]Polkinghorne, op. cit., 502.

[3]Ada R. Polkinghorne, "Parents and Teachers Appraisal of Primary-Grade Grouping," Elementary School Journal, LI (January, 1951), 278.

age, emotional and social maturity were kept together. The children were kept together for six semesters. Regrouping could and did appear at the semester. The program was believed to help the retarded as well as the accelerated.[1]

Appleton, Wisconsin initiated a continuous progress plan during the 1951-52 school year. The program was expanded to take in the fourth grade and one school included the fifth grade.

In schools where there were two or more rooms at the same grade level, the pupils were grouped in the fall by the following criteria: chronological age and intellectual, social, and emotional maturity. When deemed necessary, pupils were moved from group to group. Within the classroom, children were divided into groups for subject areas of reading, spelling, and arithmetic. The other learning situations were heterogeneous in grouping. Overcrowding could be a cause for not seeing more of this type of program. For this program to function, it must be wanted by the teachers and the teachers must know the child. There also has to be a good entrance program and a good testing program for placement.[2]

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[1] "Schools Can Change Grouping Practices," Childhood Education, XXX (October, 1953), 67.

[2] "Schools Can Change Grouping Practices," op. cit., 66-67.

A flexible grouping plan had been in use five years by 1953 in Glencoe, Illinois. Grades one through five were involved in the experiment. With the elimination of fixed grades idea, grades were combined to meet the needs of the children. This helped cut down the pupil-teacher ratio, helped equalize groups, and helped erase the grade idea in parents' minds.

The criteria in assigning children included the enrollment and needs of the children. This helped determine the number and kinds of groups. Other criterion were the physical size and growth, social development, mental development, and interests of pupils. The assigning was done in the spring through mutual decision of the teachers involved and the principal.[1]

Hillsboro, Oregon experimented with a grouping plan in one of its elementary schools in grades four through six. The grouping plan was initiated because of a greater range of abilities than was desired. All the pupils in the plan were given the following tests: California Achievement Tests, Durrelle-Sullivan, Intermediate Reading Survey, and 1950 S-Form California Short-Form Test of Mental Maturity. Using the results, pupils were divided into ability groups

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[1]Marion B. Tucker, "The Shoe Didn't Fit," National Education Association Journal, XLV (March, 1956), 160-61.

for eighty-five minutes of instruction in language arts. During this time, grade levels were dropped.[1]

In 1959, a Dual-Progress Plan was initiated on a three year experimental basis in three New York school systems under the direction of the Experimental Teaching Center of New York University. Students advanced in different curricular areas along two tracks. Language arts and social studies were taught to the usual grade classes. There were two hours of instruction in these areas each day. The same classes had physical education each day. Mathematics, science, arts, crafts, and music were instructed on a nongraded basis. There were forty minutes of instruction in mathematics and science and the same in arts and crafts and music on alternate days. Pupil's promotion was based only on the language arts-social studies areas.[2]

Advantages of ungraded grouping for the plans reviewed. Of the eight plans reviewed, claims were made that pupils showed greater achievement in six of the plans. In three plans, it was claimed there was more continuous

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[1]Richard H. Hart, "The Effectiveness of an Approach to the Problem of Varying Abilities," Journal of Educational Research, LII (February, 1959), 228-30.

[2]Glen Heathers and Morris Pincus, "The Dual Progress Plan in the Elementary School," Arithmetic Teacher, VI (December, 1959), 303-305.

growth. An advantage claimed for four of the plans was that there was less tension and frustration in evidence. In four of the plans, claims were made that there was better personal and social adjustment through the use of the ungraded grouping. The elimination of promotion pressures was claimed as an advantage for four of the plans.

Disadvantages of ungraded grouping for the plans reviewed. Disadvantages or problems were not claimed for many of the ungraded plans. The initial placement of pupils was claimed, for one plan, as a problem. In three of the plans, claims were made that the understanding of the program by both parents and teachers was considered a problem. In two of the plans, it was that there was too wide ability range yet. The lack of competition was claimed as a disadvantage for two of the plans reviewed.

Philosophies of educators on ungraded grouping. The ungraded program, dropping the grade lines, has a strong backing and is more in evidence in the thinking of many educators.

When grade standards are abandoned as a measure of achievement in subject matter, and children are assigned to the group in which they can make the best progress,

progress will be continuous from year to year.[1]

The ungraded plan continued to show good results. The plans was based on the ideas that learning should be continuous, groupings flexible, and grade lines and failures minimized.[2]

III. HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING

Many schools are heterogeneously grouped as they have been for years. Because the majority of elementary schools are grouped heterogeneously, there are few studies and few reviews of actual plans on this type of grouping.

Heterogeneous grouping plans, 1950-1960. A different slant was taken by the Highline Public Schools in Washington. In the spring, children were placed for the next fall. Each room was assigned so as to have a full range of mental abilities; a high, low, and average reading group; and no more than an average range of personality problems. Other factors in grouping were keeping a balance of boys and girls, distribution of problem parents, and peer relations.

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[1]Helen Heggerman, "Grouping Pupils for Well-Rounded Growth and Development," Educational Digest, XVIII (March, 1953), 38.

[2]Imhoff and Young, op. cit., 158.

A divided reading program was established, whereby, a group came to school at 9:00 a.m. and had an hour of reading. At 10:00 a.m., the others came and all participated in the other phases of school work. The early group went home at 2:00 p.m. and the others had reading for an hour.[1]

George Raab believed a complete heterogeneous plan was the most effective. This type of plan was used in an elementary school in Scarsdale, New York. The children were grouped so there was a median age in a class. The advantage of a good learning environment was claimed.[2]

Advantages of heterogeneous grouping in the plans reviewed. In both the Highline and Scarsdale school programs the advantages claimed were the following: differences provide stimulation, encouragement for social growth, emotional growth, physical growth, and intellectual growth.

Philosophies of educators on heterogeneous grouping. Heterogeneous grouping is still strong in the minds of many educators and others.

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[1]Rosella Roff, "Grouping and Individualizing in the Elementary Classroom," Educational Leadership, XV (December, 1957), 174-75.

[2]George E. Raab, "The Class Group: Social Setting for Learning," Elementary School Journal, LIX (December, 1958), 150-53.

Carlson suggested the interage system would provide the best learning situation for each child. The grade lines are disregarded and the classes are heterogeneous.[1]

Heterogeneous grouping provided a more normal situation for elementary children according to Hamalainen[2] and Vetach.[3]

Children in a select group will differ less in one factor than those in a heterogeneous group, but beyond the one factor they differ greatly.[4]

IV. SUMMARY

Grouping of children for instruction was a generally accepted fact. Grouping was considered advantageous in that it provided experiences and chance of participation for all children.

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[1]Wesley H. Carlson, "Interage Grouping," Educational Leadership, XV (March, 1958), 363-64.

[2]Arthur E. Hamalainen, "Method of Grouping Pupils Should Provide Normal Situations," Nation's Schools, XLV (June, 1950), 34.

[3]Jeannette Vetach, "Grouping in the Whole School," Childhood Education, XXX (October, 1953), 62-63.

[4]Harlan Hagman, The Administration of American Public Schools (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1951), p. 226.

Flexibility was considered to be very important in any type of grouping. A composite of criteria was considered the best determination for grouping.

Homogeneous grouping was very much in evidence throughout the period 1950-1960. Surveys indicated ability grouping was still used in many schools.

Grades four through six were the grades most frequently used for homogeneous grouping. Grades five and six usually showed the best results.

There had been an increasing number of provisions for the gifted children since 1950. The provisions varied from partial segregation to complete segregation including separate schools. Partial segregation of students in ability groups varied from a period, forty to sixty minutes, to half days. The shorter time periods were used for special areas such as reading and arithmetic. The longer periods were utilized for workshops. In the workshops, students participated in special interest areas, special projects, or continuation of regular classroom projects.

Advocates of partial segregation claimed the needs in certain areas were met without losing the provisions for being with people of all abilities.

Complete segregation of groups was not as prominent, but it was considered to be favorable in the programs where it was used.

The team plan, two or three children of similar ability working together and progressing at their rate of ability, was considered to be very satisfactory.

Intelligence quotients, which varied with the program and the children, and achievement scores were the main criteria in determining the gifted children. The same factors were used as the basis for ability grouping of all students. Other criteria included standardized test results; reading ability; past records including teachers' judgments; current teachers' judgments; social, mental, and physical maturity; emotional stability; special interests; and teacher-pupil relationships. Creative ability, spelling ability, and science ability were other areas considered, but were usually used for special classes in these areas.

Sixteen homogeneous programs were reviewed. The advantages showed a definite pattern. Better achievement was claimed for this type of grouping in twelve of the plans. In four of the plans, it was claimed there was better social adjustment. Less tension and frustration was claimed for eight of the plans. Meeting the needs of the gifted was claimed as an advantage for seven of the plans. In four of the plans, it was considered there was a better allotment of time. The advantage of minimiging ability ranges and the number of groups was an advantage claimed for two plans. The stimulation of pupils to work to capacity and

move up was claimed for eleven of the plans. The adaptability of the plan by most schools was claimed as an advantage for three of the plans.

Disadvantages were claimed for seven of the sixteen plans reviewed. In one plan, it was claimed that the attitudes of the high groups had created haughtiness and that slow groups lagged.

The initial placement of children was considered a problem for one plan.

In one plan it was claimed that the grouping could not be adapted to all schools because of size and cost.

In two of the plans it was claimed as a disadvantage that there was less consideration of the social and emotional values in learning experiences.

Teachers working in a cooperative plan proved to be a problem for one plan. Teachers did not cooperate with each other.

Further enrichment was necessary, even though the grouping considered satisfactory.

The proponents of homogeneous grouping claimed that this type of grouping was the means by which gifted pupils could move at their rate and other pupils at their rate. The proponents of homogeneous grouping believed that pupils of similar ability or other similarities tend to group themselves into like groups.

The opponents believed there was not as much personal attention given in homogeneous grouping. It was also believed that complete homogeneous grouping was not possible.

The surveys showed an increase in the number of ungraded plans. Most plans had been initiated since 1950.

The studies of ungraded programs showed advantages of this program in most areas.

The programs, where grade lines were discarded, usually included grades one through three. The grades combined varied, but most fell within grade one through three. Other elementary grades were found being added to the ungraded programs.

The assignment of children depended upon enrollment, physical size and growth, social development, mental development, chronological age, emotional stability, reading readiness, and needs of children. Reading ability was a main factor in some plans. There was grouping within a class in some of the programs.

Eight ungraded plans, some completely ungraded and others partially ungraded, were reviewed. Better achievement by most pupils was claimed for six of the plans. In three of the plans, it was claimed there was more continuous growth. Less tension and frustration through the use of the ungraded plan was claimed for four of the plans. In four of the plans, it was claimed there was better personal

and social adjustment. In four of the plans, it was claimed there was less pressure of promotion.

Of the eight ungraded plans reviewed, disadvantages were claimed for only part of the plans. The initial placement of a child was claimed as a disadvantage for one of the plans. The lack of teacher understanding about the plan was a disadvantage claimed for two plans. In two plans, it was claimed there was a lack of parent understanding. Wide ability range was considered a disadvantage for two plans. In two of the plans, it was claimed there was lack of competition.

Proponents of the ungraded plan believed the plan provided continuous growth and flexible grouping which were necessary for better learning situations.

Advantages claimed for heterogeneous grouping were: differences provided stimulation, encouragement for social growth, emotional growth, physical growth, and intellectual growth.

CHAPTER III

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, PROCEDURES, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of the study of grouping practices in certain typical public elementary schools, 1950 to 1960, was set forth, (1) the types of grouping used for instruction, (2) the instructional advantages and disadvantages claimed for each type of grouping, and (3) the philosophies stated as underlying the grouping practices, as reported in periodical literature, bulletins, and books.

II. PROCEDURES

A review and study of periodicals, books, and bulletins was made to learn the history of grouping until 1950, and the existing types of grouping for instruction in the elementary schools since 1950.

The limited studies and full-scale studies, surveys, and related experiences were separated from the philosophies, or expressions, of educators and others. The studies, surveys, and experiences were reviewed for advantages and disadvantages of each type of grouping.

III. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The survey of written material revealed numerous types of grouping for instruction in the elementary schools. Many were very similar in their formation, form, and functions.

There were various criteria used in grouping. The grouping factors ranged from a single criteria to a combination of many factors. The trend was to a composite of factors in the final grouping decision.

Ability grouping, with emphasis on the gifted, was found to be very much in evidence. This type of grouping was similar to that previous to 1950. The trend was to include other factors for the best grouping.

Several advantages and disadvantages were given as evidence for the different types of grouping used or in use and from studies.

Most surveys, studies, and reports on individual plans were of little scientific research value.

Two areas were in great evidence, the gifted child program and the ungraded program. These were synonymous in many programs. Though the gifted child was of great concern, a plan, such as the ungraded plan, was inaugurated to provide for the gifted and in turn provided for all pupils.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The grouping programs reviewed fell into three main areas; homogeneous grouping, heterogeneous grouping, and ungraded grouping. There is a place for each type of grouping based on school size, number of classes in grade level, school plant, teachers, instructional material, and philosophy of the school involved. Because there has been little research study on past or current plans, it would be difficult to recommend a grouping program for a specific school. It is evident that there is a need for more study of current plans and setting up of experimental plans.

Homogeneous grouping can be advantageous as is evident in the plans studied. The plan seems to be best adapted to meeting the needs of the gifted. These groups had better achievement. Even with this grouping, there must be further enrichment. This grouping did not necessarily eliminate a wide range of abilities. There will always be a certain range of abilities in any group.

In all the programs, there was some homogeneity as well as heterogeneity. The ungraded grouping included all or many of the advantages of homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping. The understanding of the plan by parents and

teachers was the greatest problem, but it has been shown this can be overcome. This type of grouping seemed to be more in evidence in the larger than in the smaller schools.

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